l: Metraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1940
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POLYGYNY

595 In reconstructing the past from legends and traditions one gains the impression that monogamy was general, but that several men, owing to their power or wealth, could afford many wives. The last supporters of paganism were certain chiefs who, having several wives, hesitated to become Christian lest they be obliged to part with them (230, vol. 6, p. 565). However, not all the chiefs availed themselves of this privilege and at the time of European contact there were only a few persons with several mates. No conclusion can be drawn from this situation since at that period there were just half as many women as men. I was told that the chiefs or persons of rank (*tangata honui*) were allowed several wives who were supposed to live in separate houses to avoid fighting—this last detail is perhaps a modern rationalization. Iri, Victoria's grandfather, had eight wives. A man generally resided with the first wife (*vie rae*), but sometimes several favorite wives lived with him. Viriamo, Tepano's mother, had been the second wife of a man of the Miru tribe (194, p. 227).

What truth there is in Thomson's statement (215, p. 465) that a husband could sell or lease his wife to another for a stated term I do not know. This may be an allusion to polyandric habits, as in the Marquesas. In the legend of Hamea and Raa, the two brothers live successively with the same woman. Some natives are said not to be very particular about their wives' adulteries with foreigners if some profit is to be gained.

MARRIAGE CEREMONY

[582] Young men now marry at about the age of 20; girls marry a little earlier.
585 If they have the mutual consent of their parents, a ceremony is performed at the church under the direction of the catechist. As the marriage is not considered entirely valid until it is blessed by a priest, they usually wait for the coming of the frigate *Baquedano* to have all unions consecrated by the chaplain. I have numerous proofs of the importance attached to the parents' con-
584 sent for marriage, but Roussel (190, pp. 465-466), who lived many years among the natives in the early sixties of the nineteenth century, asserts: "Marriages were contracted without consulting the will of the parents. They were decided by inclination." Roussel made the same statement to Palmer (168, p. 281) and to Gana (86, p. 39).

583 Although they visited the island at the same time and had access to the same source of information, Thomson and Cooke make contradictory state-
[584] ments concerning the formalities of marriage. Thomson (215, p. 465) says, "the betrothal is conducted by parents, the relations of the female paying a stipulated amount generally in food to be consumed by the friends at the feast given to celebrate the event." Cooke (54, pp. 716-717) states that the bride-

1: Metraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1940
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groom's parents had to pay for the bride and that the amount of the purchase price was the object of lengthy bargaining. On the wedding day a great feast was held at the bride's house and "everything edible, that is to say the price of the girl," was consumed. After this ceremony the bride was taken to the house of her husband.

Purchase price never existed on Easter Island and the apparent discrepancies between these two authors are easily solved by first-hand information obtained from present natives:

> When young people married, the family of the bridegroom gave fowls and food for the feast, but the family of the bride could help by making an earth oven of their own. The husband's father presented food to the wife's father, who gave him more food in return. At the wedding many fowls were killed and eaten. The brothers of the bridegroom's father sometimes helped in bringing food. It is unlikely that the couple to be married helped prepare the banquet.

Even though much of the past has been forgotten, it is obvious that marriage ceremonies were never surrounded by a complicated ritual. When old Viriamo married her first husband " . . . there was no ceremony of any kind, no new clothes nor feasting; her father simply took her to her new home and handed her over" (194, p. 227). This was probably an exception. Normal weddings required the celebration of a feast with the usual distribution of food. Probably most of the food consumed on this occasion was supplied by the family of the bridegroom, but the bride's family contributed its share. The food was accumulated around a conical stage made of a bundle of *hau* poles (190, p. 466), evidently similar to the conical *akari* of the Maori which served the same purpose (20, vol. 1, p. 381). The young married couple presided at the feast and took part in the meal. After all the food was eaten, the marriage was considered valid (190, p. 466).

Status of Women

Modern Easter Island women seem to be well treated and to have considerable influence. They insist on expressing their opinions in all discussions but probably would not dare to resist openly the will of their husbands. Tepano's wife, Maria Ika, was in our employ but left because her husband wished her to do so. She expressed her regret but said, "I am a woman, I must always obey." I know of numerous women who were beaten because of disobedience.

Most family troubles I heard of were provoked by the infidelity of the husband and the anger of the wife. However, there are some couples with equal and mutual love. A particularly striking example of conjugal fidelity and affection is that of Rosario Arencibe Teao who followed her husband into the leper settlement when he was confined there. At the time she entered the settlement she was in perfect health, but she contracted the disease many years later.

2:Ferdon A-5 (1956) 1957
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up to the parents, though Jorge mentioned that other relatives might be consulted at this time. However, such consultation cannot be long extended, for consent — or rejection — is given very shortly. If accepted, the father of the boy immediately pours some drinks and both families and their relatives are sent for and a party is given that very day. 584

MARRIAGE

When a couple is about to marry, the father of the bridegroom designates one of his brothers to collect presents from the family. Those who are supposed to give at this time are the father's brothers and sisters, cousins, *compadres*, and certain individuals related by marriage.[3] Of considerable interest is the fact that the male members of the father's *tumu*, or — to use the islander's present Spanish term — *aliados*, must give presents at this time.[4] Although the *tumu* no longer operates to the extent that marriage must be within the *tumu*, though such is looked upon with high favor, its continued existence is clearly recognized in that not only do its members give marriage gift-exchange presents to any one of their members whose son or daughter is being married, but they are automatically invited to any feasts given by any member of the *tumu*. 583 602 613 [582]

The gifts collected at this time, which may consist of foodstuffs, cows, pigs, cloth, or money, are turned over to the bridegroom's father who then invites the bride's father and her extended family to a feast, and they come bringing guitars for singing and dancing. After the feast the bridegroom's father presents to the bride's father the accumulated gifts his brother has collected. At such a time the gifts may often be spread out in the form of a boat. 583 584

Some time after the bride's father has received his gifts, one of his brothers or sisters is designated to collect gifts from the bride's family which are then turned over to the bride's father. It is now his turn to invite the bridegroom's father and extended family to his home for a feast, after which the collected gifts are presented to the bridegroom's father. In all of this, the engaged couple receive nothing, for, as Jorge pointed out, when they get married they will have each other and that is sufficient.

Although common law marriages unaccompanied by ceremony still exist, the 583 585

3 I was unable to determine precisely which relatives by marriage must present gifts, in that I found out too late that Easter Islanders use the Spanish word *cuñado*, or brother-in-law, loosely to include husbands of cousins and even nieces, not all of whom are required to give presents.

4 A *tumu* is a group of lineages into which, in former times, a man might marry. The *tumu* to which the Tepano family belongs, for example, consists of the Tepano, Paksenio, and Pora lineages. [582]

2:Ferdon A-5 (1956) 1957
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[583] great majority follow a formalized pattern. At the present time two Chilean-
[177] derived marriage ceremonies take place, a civil marriage on a Saturday and a Catholic church marriage on Sunday. However it is on Saturday, after the civil wedding, that the bridegroom's father gives a large feast for both of the extended families involved in the match. It is at this time that the gifts received by the bride's and bridegroom's fathers are formally distributed among their respective families.
[583] To aid in this division of the spoils, a "secretary" is appointed to see that each relative receives a gift of value proportionate to the one he originally gave to the gift exchange. All my informants agreed that the marriage gift-exchange ceremony is a period of great and jovial rivalry to see which family has given the biggest and most valuable gifts.

On Sunday evening after the church wedding a general party for the couple is given, and it is at this time that the bridegroom sings a specially composed song
[533] to his bride and she, in turn, sings her special song to him, each going to the other's house for the purpose. It is the best of these songs that have been maintained on Easter Island and today compose the more modern corpus of true Easter Island songs.

591 Upon the marriage of a young couple they are free to live in the home of either
439 of their parents, or they may build a home of their own. Actually, living with one
648 or another of the parents is a virtual necessity, owing to the fact that all building
135 materials are brought from the continent once a year by the Chilean Navy and the
342 supply has never caught up with the demand. Further hindering construction is the government's rationing system which, though abundantly fair, allows no single family to buy in one year all the material needed to build a home. This system has
[596] resulted in the development, or maintenance, of an extended family pooling system in which, if the family is large enough and each draws his rightful ration of building materials, a house can often be built from the total extended family allotment for a single year. It might also be mentioned that in the construction of such a house, any, or all, of the extended family may be called upon for aid.

423 Although the building of a house is a problem, a young couple as yet has no
648 difficulty in obtaining land. At the present time the Chilean government allots the use-rights to five hectarias of terrain to each newly married couple. Formerly an Easter Islander could own his land outright, but this is no longer true, the Chilean government retaining title to all land, owing, apparently, to the strategic nature of the island in the event of war.

606 One of the more interesting facets of Easter Island marriage is the position of the father-in-law in the life of the married couple. Of the two male parents-in-law, it is the girl's father who appears to hold the dominant position of power in the

10: Cooke D-5 (1886) 1899
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latter endeavor to "bull" the market, while those of the boy do their utmost to "bear" the commodity under appraisement, the price is finally agreed upon and the bargain is concluded, the consideration being a specified quantity of sugar cane, taro, sweet potatoes, chickens, etc., to be paid the girl's parents. A day is then fixed upon; relatives and friends are notified; due preparations are made at the girl's house, to which the articles mentioned have meanwhile been sent, and at the time appointed, all interested being present, a grand feast is held, at which, as a rule, everything edible, that is to say the price of the girl, is consumed. That important business being finished, bride and groom retire to the residence of the parents of the latter, by whom the bride is adopted as their own child, and thenceforth the parties are husband and wife.

The cares and the obligations of matrimony, as well as of parentage, sit lightly upon the Rapa Nuis. Although marital infidelity may be rare, it is stated that a husband will, in consideration of a certain quantity of produce, make over all right in his wife to another for a specified period, at the expiration of which time he will take back the wife and she again becomes the partner of his joys and sorrows. This might be called polygamy in another form.

Fixing the average at three gives, I think, a very fair estimate of the number of children to a family, and the lack of fecundity among them will readily be explained by the early child marriages, customs, habits of life, intermarriage, and the degeneracy of the race.

In these people the lower part of the body and extremities were found well developed, and in the women more so than would be supposed from their slight physique. In the latter the skin was lighter in color in the unexposed than in the exposed parts. The hips are broad and full, the thighs large, round, and firm, and legs straight and tapering to the ankles, which, with the feet, were small and delicate. They are but sparingly hirsute. The breasts of those examined were moderately large, full, round, firm, and carried well up on the chest. The nipples were quite small, but with good-sized areola, which latter presented, in some instances, that peculiar puffy, translucent appearance, as though filled with serum, often seen throughout the other Pacific Islands. The Rapa Nuis differed from these in that the areola was not so large nor of so deep a tint, the writer having seen them in other islands covering half the breast and nearly black in color.

The skin of the woman examined, where not covered with tattooing, was nearly as light in color as that of the average brunette, and very fine, smooth, soft, and delicate.

There seems to be no doubt that, with all their apparent mildness and good nature, the baser passions and savage instincts of these people are strong within them, and instances of inhumanity occasionally crop out among them. A case which came under the notice of Dr. Whitaker was that of a woman who was suffering from spinal deformity, the result

15:Routledge E-5 (1914-1915) 1919
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to several in turn, finally returning to its own destination. We collected a certain number of genealogical trees, the various dramatis personæ being for this purpose represented by matches or buttons. It was not a very popular line of research, the cry being apt to be raised, "Now let's talk of something interesting"; but some two hundred names were in this way placed in their family groups, with details of clan, place of residence and colour, and some knowledge obtained with regard to many more. It is not of course enough ground on which to found any theory, but it was very useful in checking information gathered in other ways. Only in one case was it possible to get back beyond the great-grandfather of our informant, but the knowledge of family connections was often greater than would be found among Europeans. The number of childless marriages was striking.

The early story of Viriamo (fig. 83), the oldest woman living in our day, gives a picture of this primitive state of things. She belonged to the clan of Ureohei, and her family had lived for some generations, as far back as could be remembered, on the edge of the eastern volcano, not far from Raraku. The great-grandfather, who was dark, had as his only wife a white woman of the Hamea. Their son was white, and had two wives, one of the Tupahotu and one of the Ngaure. By the first, although she also was white, he had a dark son who married a white wife of his own clan, Ureohei, but of a different group. Viriamo was the second of their eight children, all of whom were white save herself and her eldest brother. Four of the girls died young in the epidemic of smallpox in 1864. Viriamo and two of her sisters were initiated as children into the bird rite.[1] When older she was tattooed with rings round her forehead and with the dark-blue breeches. Somewhat later, but still as a young woman, she went over to Anakena and had her ears pierced, but she never had the lobe extended, preferring to let it remain small. When asked about her marriage, she bridled as coyly as a young girl. Her first union was a matter of arrangement, the husband, who was also of the Ureohei, giving her father much food, and, if she had refused to accept the situation, she would, she said, have been beaten. There was no ceremony of any kind, no new clothes nor feasting; her father simply took her to her new home and handed her over. The house was near the two statues with

[1] See below, pp. 266–68.